

Message Text

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SUBJ: SEPT 11 EARTHQUAKE AND ITS AFTERMATH

REF: STATE 227509

1. SEPTEMBER 11 TREMORS HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BY SERIES OF SEVERE SHOCKS EARLY AND LATER MORNING SEPTEMBER 15. SEVERAL REGISTERED 5.8 MINIMUM ON THE RICHTER SCALE. THE EVACUATION PLAN FOR THE AGED AND CHILDREN TO THE GRADO AREA HAS BEEN INITIATED ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. THE ITALIANS HAVE CLOSED THE BORDER AT COCCAU TO INCOMING TRAFFIC FROM AUSTRIA. THE RAILINE BETWEEN UDINE AND TARVISIO IS BLOCKED IN SEVERAL PLACES. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO REPORTED DEATHS AND ABOUT 25 HOSPITALIZED. THE HARDEST HIT CENTER WAS NORTHAUCJLMONTE SA N SIMEONE AND WEST OF GEMONA. NUMEROUS HOUSES HAVE COLLAPSED AND A NUMBER OF SMALL TOWNS ARE ISOLATED. HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE AREA. THE ITALIAN ARMY IS BACK ON THE JOB. PRESS REPORTS HAVE INDICATED THERE ARE ABOUT 60,000 HOMELESS PEOPLE, BUT ITALIAN AUTHORITIES CANNOT CONFIRM THE NUMBER. IN ANY EVENT,
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SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN THE 40,000 PRESENTLY IN TENTS

ARE NOW HOMELESS. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION TODAY ZAMBERLETTI TOLD US SITUATION COULD BE AS BAD AS OR WORSE THAN MAY 6 IN TERMS OF DAMAGE.

2. THE REPERCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE LATEST TREMORS ARE MANY. ABOVE ALL, FRIULI IN MANY RESPECTS IS BACK TO WHERE IT WAS MAY 7 WITH ITS BUILDING PROGRAM, BUT WITHOUT THE CUSHION OF THREE MONTHS OF SUMMER. LOCAL OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT WITH WHAT THEY SEE AS THE HERETOFORE INADEQUATE TECHNICAL PREPARATION OF THE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT. IN THEIR VIEW A NEW APPROACH IS NEEDED. THE BUILDING ON OR THE REPAIRING OF THE MARGINALLY REPAIRABLE IS OUT AND NEW CONSTRUCTION IS NEEDED. THE PREFABBRICATED HOUSING PROGRAM CONTINUES APACE BUT HOUSING NEEDS HAVE JUMPED GREATLY OVERNIGHT.

3. AS FOR THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, ITS OBJECTIVE IS OBVIOUSLY TO RECONSTRUCT THE REGION IN THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE TO HEAD OFF DEPOPULATION OF AN AREA WHICH IS BOTH A FRONTIER ZONE AND ONE WHICH CONTINUES TO SUPPORT HEAVILY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC). TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE THE GOVERNMENT MUST FURNISH HOUSING. THIS IS THE SOLE ISSUE NOW. IF IT IS UNSUCCESSFUL, THE PRESENT VOLUNTARY AND TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF THE AGED, THE INFIRM, AND THE CHILDREN WILL CONTINUE WITH OTHERS FOLLOWING. POLITICALLY, THE PCI AND PSI ARE CALLING FOR REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS AMONG ALL FORCES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARC TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION. THE PSI HAS CALLED ON THE PSDI AND PRI TO WITHDRAW THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GIUNTAS LED BY THE DC. FRIULI IS DAILY FRONT PAGE ITEM FOR UNITA WHICH IS DEMANDING THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DO SOMETHING TO ALLEVIATE NOW THE HOUSING HARDSHIPS.

4. SINCE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS WILL BE GAUGED SOLELY BY ITS ABILITY TO PROVIDE HOUSING, CONSIDERATION MIGHT BE GIVEN TO UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE IN THIS AREA. FOR INSTANCE, THE UNITED STATES IS AN ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER IN THE FIELD OF PRODUCING MOBILE HOMES CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING WINTER WEATHER AND WHICH COULD HOUSE INDIVIDUAL FAMILY GROUPS. AN AIR LIFT OF SUCH TRAILERS IS FEASIBLE

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TO AVIANO AND PERHAPS TO THE ITALIAN MILITARY AIRFIELD OUTSIDE OF UDINE. MOBILE HOMES COULD LITERALLY BE ROLLED ONTO AIRCRAFT (AND/OR FREIGHTERS IF SEA WAS PREFERRED) AND ROLLED OFF IN ITALY AND TOWED TO THE SITES SPECIFIED BY THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES. TEAMS OF US EXPERTS MIGHT ALSO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO OVERSEE THE SETTING UP OF THE TRAILERS. CHARITAS, THE CATHOLIC RELIEF ORGANIZATION, LAUNCHED AN APPEAL AT NOON TODAY FOR THE LOAN OF TRAILERS

TO HELP HOUSE THE EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS. REPORTEDLY ABOUT 45 TRAILERS HAVE BEEN VOLUNTEERED SO FAR.

5. VARIOUS FACTORS MAY ARGUE AGAINST SUCH AN APPROACH, E.G., THE HIGH UNIT COST. HOWEVER, IT IS PRECISELY NOW THAT A BOLD STROKE IS NEEDED TO HELP GALVANIZE LOCAL EFFORTS, UNDERSCORE DRAMATICALLY THE DEPTH OF THE US COMMITMENT TO THE ITALIAN PLIGHT, AND FINALLY DEMONSTRATE THE KIND OF IMAGINATIVE AND BOLD PROGRAMS WHICH AMERICANS ARE NOTED FOR. US PRIVATE INDUSTRY MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED TO PITCH IN LED BY ZNHPHXZPCLCUUVUIUTED CITIZENS, FOR EXAMPLE, AS MR. JENO PAULUCCI WHO JUST VISITED THE FRIULI.

6. AS SEEN FROM HERE THE SLOGAN IS /HOUSING NOW/. IF SUCH DEMANDS ARE NOT MET IN A MEANINGFUL MANNER, WHATEVER THE GOVERNMENT DOES WILL BE SEEN AS TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE.

7. THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION IS SCHEDULED TO WIND UP ITS WORK AND RETURN TO ROME TODAY (SEPTEMBER 15). WE HAVE ASKED FOR A BRIEFING BY LOCAL OFFICIALS ON RESULTS, DECISIONS, ETC., OF COMMISSION S VISIT, BUT KEY FIGURES ARE STILL IN UDINE WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS. CONCRETE RESULTS SO FAR INCLUDE RE-NAMING OF STATE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ZAMBERLETTI AS COMMISSARIO STRAORDINARIOJ FOR THE EARTH-QUAKE REGION. HIS DEPUTIES ARE UDINE PREFECT SPAZIANTE, PORDENONE PREFECT ARGENTIERI, AND MANTUA DIVISION OCOMMANDER GENERAL ROSSI. IN ADDITION, WE UNDERTAND THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED ONCE AGAIN A STATE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY FOR FRIULI, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 13. LOCALLY, ENGINEER EMANUELE CHIAVOLA HAS BEEN NAMED THE REGION S COORDINATOR. OEN.

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